

A Handbook of Information  
About  
**The Old Testament**



PREPARED FOR  
THE TEACHERS OF WEST VIRGINIA  
BY  
ROBERT ALLEN ARMSTRONG, L. H. D.



Issued by  
THE DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOLS OF WEST VIRGINIA  
MORRIS P. SHAWKEY, State Superintendent



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## INTRODUCTION

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No one can claim to be well educated who is not fairly familiar with the history and literature found in the Bible. The English Bible has so shaped the ideas and ideals of the English-speaking people, has been so woven into its literature, that it has become the one supreme book in that tongue. There are many reasons why such a study as is suggested in the following pages should be richly profitable.

A close and critical study of the Bible will make its message clearer. The message of any book, secular or sacred, is the chief thing about it; and it must be understood that the great thing about this book is the wonderful message which it proclaims, the divine spirit which lies back of it all. But all messages, great or insignificant, must be communicated through the same medium. The truths of the Bible are offered to us in the same words, phrases, and literary forms that are used in secular literature, so we should make diligent use of all our secular knowledge, methods, and skill, in weighing and considering the greater message of the Bible.

A study of the Bible is important because it is a great storehouse of good English. Coleridge said, "Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style." Mr. George Saintsbury said, "But great as our Bacon and Raleigh, they can not approach, as writers of prose, the company of scholarly divines who produced what is probably the greatest prose work in any language—the Authorized Version of the Bible in English." John Ruskin, who was doubtless the greatest master of pure, idiomatic, vigorous, and eloquent prose that the last century produced, says that his mother required him in childhood to repeat to her over and over again many passages from the Bible. This is the secret of his admirable diction and perfect command of English phraseology.

Again the study of the Bible is important because in our everyday speech and in our secular literature there are multitudes of words and phrases drawn from it, whose full meaning and force can be understood only by those familiar with the original sources. Any one who lays claim to any degree of culture cannot be ignorant of these words, phrases, incidents and characters. An illiterate man understands, after a fashion, the phrases: "the widow's mite," "a Judas' kiss," "the flesh-pots of Egypt," "a Jehu," "a Nimrod," "a Solomon,"

“a Delilah,” “bread upon the water,” “a still small voice”; but to those who are familiar with the origin and setting of these terms, they have a vividness and a significance that others cannot appreciate.

A knowledge of the Bible is important, also, because all modern thought, ethics, culture, art, law, literature, conduct, and the dull, common round of life, find here most of the materials out of which they are shaped, and by which they are inspired. Thought finds here its problems; ethics, its standards; culture, its rich materials; art, its most inspiring subjects; law, its fundamental ideas; literature, its spirit and ideals; conduct, its primary sanctions; and the multitude of common relations and activities of life find here those elements of mystery, hope and exaltation which make them at all endurable. Charles Dudley Warner declares that a knowledge of the Bible is a requirement of general intelligence.

“Wholly apart from its religious or from its ethical value, the Bible is the one book that no intelligent person who wishes to come into contact with the world of thought and to share the ideas of the great minds of the Christian era can afford to be ignorant of. All modern literature and all art are permeated with it. There is scarcely a great work in the language that can be fully understood and enjoyed without this knowledge, so full is it of allusions and illustrations from the Bible. This is true of fiction, or poetry, or economic and philosophic works, and also of the scientific and even agnostic treatises. It is not at all a question of religion or theology, or of dogma; it is a question of general intelligence. A boy or girl at college in the presence of work set for either to master, without a fair knowledge of the Bible is an ignoramus, and is disadvantaged accordingly. It is in itself almost a liberal education, as many great masters of literature have testified. It has so entered into law, literature, thought, the whole modern life of the Christian world, that ignorance of it is a most serious disadvantage to the student.”


DeQuincey divided literature into two classes, the literature of knowledge, and the literature of power. The Bible belongs peculiarly to the literature of power. It is the most powerful book that ever spoke to man. The literature of knowledge will live only till some one else embodies the old facts in a new form. The literature of power can never become obsolete; the deeper and truer the message of a book the more inevitable will be the form in which it will state itself. The literature of the Bible is so surcharged with power that virtue goes out from it whenever it touches the people. This virtue influences



their thoughts, forms their governments, frames their laws, shapes their morals, moulds their characters, and fashions their lives.

Again it is profitable to study the Bible because it contains the best forms of literature in satisfying perfection—"the rarest and the richest in all departments of thought and imagination." This library of sixty-six books presents a rich and complete variety of literature. Here may be found law, folk-lore, traditions, official records, historical narrative, epic poetry, dramatic poetry, lyric poetry, patriotic poetry, patriotic addresses, religious addresses, prophecies, proverbial philosophy, biographies, theology, circular letters, private letters, and even fables and dream literature.





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## GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

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If by the name of Palestine we mean the land of Israel's history, it is not possible to think of fixed boundaries; but the traditional boundaries are pretty well defined. Palestine is a country of southwestern Asia, comprising the southern portion of Syria, and bounded on the west by the Mediterranean sea, on the north by the mountain ranges of Lebanon, and on the south and east by the desert. The area is about 10,000 square miles, West Palestine, 6,000, and East Palestine, 4,000. Its length, measuring from the source of the Jordan to Beersheba is 143 miles; to Kadish Barnea 187 miles. The width varies from 112 miles at the south to 47 miles at the north. The area of West Virginia is two and one-half times that of Palestine. According to elevation and character of surface, Palestine is divided into four regions or strips running north and south: the Maritime Plain, the Central Range, the Jordan Valley, and the Eastern Range. The first is a plain along the coast from five to twenty-five miles wide. It is of marked fertility and includes the plains of Esdraelon, Sharon, and Philistia. Adjoining the Philistine plain is the Shephelah. It is a hilly region which curves round this plain from Gaza to Jaffa like a great amphitheater cut by three or four great gaps. It is a region of unusual interest and importance in the history of Palestine. Its elevation is from 500 to 1500 feet above the level of the sea.

The Central Range, the backbone of the country, is really a continuous range of hills and mountains, though broken by cross-valleys. In the north are the uplands of Galilee, in the center, the hills and plains of Samaria, and to the south, the lofty highlands of Judea.

From the Central Range the descent east to the Jordan Valley is very rapid. This Valley is really a deep gorge, the deepest depression in the world. The Jordan river takes its rise at the foot of Mount Hermon 705 feet above the level of the sea, and flowing through Lake Meron and the Sea of Genessaret empties into the Dead Sea. The length of the channel from its source to its mouth is 250 miles, although a straight course is only 135 miles. The fountain spring of the Jordan is 705 feet above sea level, the sea of Genessaret, 682 feet below sea level, and the Dead Sea 1292 feet below the sea. The Jordan Valley varies in width, character of surface, and fertility. In

the north it is four miles wide and fertile, in the last part of its course it is fifteen miles wide and alkaline and arid. The Dead Sea is but the continuation of the Jordan cleft, in fact, its deepest part. It is 47 miles long and 10 miles wide and has a maximum depth of 1300 feet. To the east of the Jordan valley rises the east Jordan plateau comprising the countries Edom, Moab, Gilead and Bashan. This plateau is about 150 miles long from Hermon on the north to the south end of the Dead Sea; its width, from the edge of the Jordan Valley to the edge of the desert varies from thirty to eighty miles. The elevation is, on the average, 2000 feet above the level of the sea; so it has a temperate climate. It varies greatly in soil and features but is in general hilly, well watered and well adapted to grazing.

Palestine is a land of great extremes in climate and natural features. From the north to the south there is a difference of elevation of 10,468 feet, Mount Hermon in the north having a height of 9,166 feet and the Dead Sea being 1,292 feet below sea level. There is every kind of climate from the sub-tropical of Jericho to the sub-Alpine of Lebanon. From Carmel may be seen at one sweep all the intervening climatic steps—the sands and palms of the coast, the wheat fields of Esdraelon, the oaks and sycamore of Galilee, the pines, peaks and eternal snows of Hermon. In its physical configuration Palestine is an epitome of the whole world. The great variety of climate and natural features produces a corresponding diversity in the plant and animal life. There are said to be 113 species of mammals, 348 of birds, 91 of reptiles and amphibia and more than 3000 species of flowering plants.

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## USE OF THE MAP IN READING

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Every student of the Bible should study a map of Palestine carefully. Most Bibles contain fairly good maps. The location of a great many places mentioned in the narratives is a matter of conjecture because so many of the ancient landmarks were obliterated centuries ago. Hence, many maps differ in their location of the division lines of the tribal possessions, in the location of towns, etc. But the maps found in well-made Bibles are accurate enough for all practical purposes, and are invaluable aids in getting clear and definite mental pictures of the places and events described. The student should be able to locate the countries which border on Palestine; the chief moun-



tains, as Mount Hermon (on the northern border); Mount Carmel (near the coast); Mount Tabor, Mount Gilboa, Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (near the center); Mount Pisgah and Mount Nebo (northeast of the Dead Sea); and Mount Sinai or Horeb (in Arabia). He should be able to locate the chief towns also, as Dan, Jezreel, Dothan, Shechem, Samaria, Shiloh, Bethel, Jericho, Gibeon, Mizpah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron. He should be able, too, to locate the homes of the different tribes, as Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe Manasseh, east of the Jordan; Ephraim in the center of the west-Jordan country, with Manasseh on its northern and Dan and Benjamin on its southern border; Judah south of Benjamin, and Asher and Naphthali in the far north.

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## A BRIEF OUTLINE OF HEBREW HISTORY

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Hebrew history before the Christian era may be divided into nine general periods: (1) the period of the Patriarchs; (2) the period of the Judges (— -1037); (3) the United Kingdom (1037-937); (4) the Divided Kingdom (937-586); (5) period of the Exile (586-538); (6) the Persian period (538-332); (7) the Greek period (332-164); (8) the Maccabean period (164-63); (9) the Roman period 63-B. C.-400 A. D.)

1. The period of the Patriarchs can not be limited by exact dates; but about 1500 B. C. a party of emigrants from Mesopotamia set out for Palestine under the leadership of Abraham who had, a few years before, emigrated with his father Terah from Chaldea. He was a pioneer hero and by his life established such standards of honor, righteousness and faith that his achievements have become the permanent possession of the world and material for the ideals of the multitude of his descendants. He was succeeded in leadership by his son Isaac, and he by Jacob. After many years of bondage in Egypt the work of Moses changed the character of the Hebrew commonwealth and ushered in the regime of the Judges.

2. The period of the Judges extended to the organization of the Kingdom under Saul. This may be called the age of heroes. As men were needed they were raised up, for there was opportunity for the strongest, the fittest. There came to the front such strong men as Othneil, Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel. These judges were military dictators with religious authority, a sort of union of the

warrior and the religious reformer. The nation was unorganized and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

3. The establishment of the Kingdom was not the result of a sudden impulse. After Gideon's successful campaigns as judge, the people had wanted him to be king; Abimelech tried to assume kingly authority; and many judges set up a semi-royal state in imitation of the rulers of surrounding nations. The example of other peoples, worldly ambition, and their satisfactory experiences under the wise, strong and steady rule of Samuel, convinced the Hebrews that they ought to have a king. Saul was chosen king and ruled with indifferent success. David succeeded him, extended the kingdom and gave strength and stability to the government. Under Solomon the Kingdom attained to great splendor outwardly, but within were the seeds of revolt.

4. The death of Solomon was followed by the revolt of Jeroboam and the division of the Kingdom. The exact lines of division are not known, but in the southern kingdom were Judah and parts of two or three other tribes while the remainder of the people adhered to the northern kingdom. The capital of the southern kingdom was Jerusalem, of the northern kingdom Shechem and Tirzah and later Samaria. On the death of Solomon the people had petitioned his son and successor Rehoboam for relief from the burdens of taxation caused by the splendor and extravagance of the government of Solomon. His answer to the petition was both foolish and insulting. So the northern tribes threw off their allegiance and set up a new kingdom, and chose Jeroboam for their ruler. The northern kingdom was named Israel, the southern Judah. The government of Israel continued 216 years under nine dynasties of kings. Judah lasted one hundred and thirty years longer and was ruled by descendants of King David in direct succession, with the exception of the time of Athaliah's usurpation.

5. Israel was conquered and the people carried into captivity in the year 721 B. C. Judah was overcome and the people taken into captivity in 586. Israel was carried off by the Assyrians under Sargon; Judah, by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar. The people of Israel never returned to their native land; but numbers of the people of Judah came back and lived as a nation for many years, though the country was subject to foreign nations during most of its history. They went into exile a nation, they returned a church; deprived of political power, they developed their literature and codified their laws. Their exile changed them in many ways. They lost their language and many of their habits and characteristics. They were changed



from farmers to merchants and traders. Not all of the exiled Jews returned to Palestine. More than half of them remained in foreign lands and formed "Ghettos" in the cities of the ancient world. These expatriated people were later called the "Jews of the Dispersion," or the "Grecian Jews."

6. The Persian period was an experiment of civic life for a subject people in their own land. They rebuilt their capital and its temple, and lived under the rule of a Persian viceroy, who was sometimes one of their own princes. In this period Ezra promulgated a new edition of The Law, Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem, relieved the poor from oppressive financial burdens and suppressed mixed marriages.

7. Through the conquests of Alexander the Great, Judah came under Greek rule. The Ptolemies of Alexandria held control for over a century. They exercised both a political and an intellectual influence. Alexandria became a great center of Jewish thought and study, and constant intercourse with Jerusalem strengthened Judaism in both regions. In the year 203 B. C. Egyptian gave way to Syrian control under Antiochus III. This change of rulers brought to the Jews a change of treatment. The Syrian rulers undertook to compel them to renounce their religion. The temple was desecrated and left to ruin, and the Jewish worshippers were tortured and slain in one of the most cruel persecutions of all history. Because of the loyalty of the Jews to their religion under the most inhuman persecutions, Antiochus determined to exterminate the whole nation. But the cruel oppression of the Assyrians caused a new epoch of heroism to rise upon Israel.

8. The Maccabean period was a period of revolt against Assyrian oppression and cruelty. A noble priest Matthias in the year 167 B. C., unfurled the banner of independence from the Assyrian yoke. Five years later his son and successor, the great Judas Maccabaeus, recovered Jerusalem, purified the temple, and restored the ancient religion. In the year 141 B. C. Jewish liberty was formally recognized, and the Maccabean princes ruled for a time over an independent state. But in 63 B. C. Pompey the Great made Syria a Roman province with Judea as a subordinate part of the province.

9. Thus Palestine, with other lands, became an integral part of the great Roman empire. In the years that followed there were revolts, but the Jews never gained a vestige of their political freedom. Their condition remained unchanged during the first four centuries of the Christian era.

## THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS ARRANGED IN HEBREW CHRONOLOGY

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### I. THE BEGINNINGS.

1. The beginnings of the human race.—Genesis I--XI.
2. The beginnings of the chosen people.—Genesis XII--L.

### II. A TIME OF TESTING AND TRIAL.

1. The escape from bondage.—Exodus.
2. The discipline of the wilderness.—Numbers.
3. The struggles of the conquest.—Joshua.
4. Striving to find the right way.—Judges, Ruth.

### III. UNITY, GROWTH, AND PROSPERITY.

1. Seeking unity in organization and leadership.—1 Samuel.
2. The United Kingdom under David.—2 Samuel.
3. The United Kingdom under Solomon.—1 Kings I--XI.

### IV. DIVISION AND DECLINE.

1. The Northern Kingdom.
  - (1) Varying fortunes of the northern kingdom through 216 years under twenty kings.—1 Kings XII--2 Kings XVIII.
  - (2) The voices of the prophets in instruction, prophecy, warning and denunciation.
 

Elijah—The accusing prophet, a man of the desert, 1 Kings XVII--2 Kings II.

Elisha—The sympathetic prophet, a man among the people.—2 Kings II--XIII.

Amos — The shepherd prophet who (in time of Jeroboam II) denounced the prosperous corruption of the kingdom.—Book of Amos.

Hosea (745-735)—A prophet who proclaimed God's unquenchable love for Israel.—Book of Hosea.



## 2. The Southern Kingdom—Judah.

(1) Victories and defeats of Judah through a period of 389 years, under twenty-two rulers, with government usually stable and the people loyal.—1 Kings XIV—2 Kings.

(2) The voices of the Prophets.

Isaiah (740-690)—The renowned prophet who was a great statesman, a preacher of righteousness, and a great optimist proclaiming the gospel of hope.—Book of Isaiah I--XXXIX.

Micah (720-708)—The prophet who in the time of Isaiah, from the standpoint of the peasants, denounced the cruelty and oppression of the rulers, priests and prophets.—Book of Micah.

Zephaniah (630-605)—A prophet who lived in the early days of Josiah and denounced the corrupt worship and the social injustice of the time.—Book of Zephaniah.

Nahum (about 265)—A prophet of the latter days of Josiah's reign who pronounced the doom of Nineveh.—Book of Nahum.

Habakkuk (About 605)—A prophet of the latter days of Josiah who denounced the cruelty, injustice and idolatry of the Chaldeans who were to be God's instrument for punishing Judah, a people better than themselves.—Book of Habakkuk.

Jeremiah (626-586)—A fearless preacher of truth who lived amid the stirring events of Josiah's reign, of the capture of Jerusalem and the deportation of the captives.—Book of Jeremiah.

## V. THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

1. With the exile there came a break in the historical narratives of the Old Testament but the period gave rise to several books of prophecy.

2. The Voices of the Prophets.

Lamentations (About 540)—Prophecies accredited to Jeremiah. They give descriptions of the sack of the city of Jerusalem, of the miserable estate of the exiles,

and make appeals for deliverance and for vengeance on the oppressors.—Book of Lamentations.

Obadiah (About 586)—A prophet who delivers bitter denunciations on Edom for its ill-treatment of the Jews in the ruin of Judah.—Book of Obadiah.

Ezekiel (592-570)—A young contemporary of Jeremiah who represents the transition from the prophet to the scribe or theologian of later days. In captivity himself he first tried to destroy the false hopes of his fellow exiles in their return, but after the destruction of Jerusalem he proclaimed the promise of a more glorious kingdom.—Book of Ezekiel.

The Second Isaiah (546-539)—The “great unknown” prophet who sounded a note of hope in the closing years of the exile. The book is the culmination of Old Testament teaching and an approach to gospel revelation.—Book of Isaiah XL--LXVI.

## VI. THE RETURN FROM THE EXILE (536-458).

1. The history of the return and the building of the city and temple, and the instituting of many social reforms.—Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

2. Esther—A book written probably about 350 B. C., but the events of which belong to the years soon after the return from exile. It is generally regarded as an allegory with a basis of historic fact, and is designed to encourage the Jews by showing how God protects his people and destroys their enemies.

3. The Voices of the Prophets.

Haggai (About 530) and Zechariah (520-518)—Two prophets who were commissioned to arouse the Jews to greater energy in rebuilding the temple. It is promised that the new temple shall be more glorious than that of Solomon.—Books of Haggai and Zechariah.

Malachi (460-430)—A prophet who is interested particu-



larly in the gifts and dues for the maintenance of the service of the temple, and the priesthood, showing clearly the transition from prophet to priest.—Book of Malachi.

Joel (About 350)—A prophet who proclaims the coming of the day of the Lord as a season of terrible calamities from which Judah must be delivered by repentance; and this repentance must be shown in a formal way, by weeping, fasting, and praying—other proofs of the change to formalism.—Book of Joel.

Jonah (About 350)—This book is not a prophecy but an anonymous narrative which should probably be interpreted as a protest against the narrowness and bitterness of the spirit of Judah in this age. It teaches the wideness of God's mercy and would have Jonah learn the lesson of sympathy for other men and nations.—Book of Jonah.

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## HISTORY OF THE BIBLE AS A BOOK

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*Its Origin and Development.* The Bible has a natural as well as a supernatural history. It was written as thousands of other books are written, and preserved and transmitted as thousands of other books are preserved and transmitted. The books of the Old Testament were of slow growth and gave expression to the developing religious consciousness of the Hebrew race. The writing of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments extended through a period of about 1500 years. Among the people of the Hebrew race there appeared again and again men of lofty vision, men of inspiration, through whom messages of spiritual truth were given to their fellows and to the world. These messages were embodied in the books of the Bible, and the books grew as the messages grew. In writing these books the inspired authors made use of materials long since lost to the world. So the Bible as we have it today represents the remains of a very wide literature. There are in the books as we have them now, quotations from and references to a score of other books which are now lost. Some of these books are "The Acts of Solomon," "The Chronicles of King David," "The Book of Nathan the Prophet," "The Book of Gad the

Seer," "The Book of Jasher," and "The Book of the Wars of the Lord."

*The Canon.* The word "canon" is a Greek word meaning literally a measuring rod; it means in this connection an authoritative list or catalogue of the books which the Churches receive as given by inspiration and as constituting for them the divine rule of faith and practice, in distinction from the "apocryphal" books of uncertain authority. It is an interesting study to follow out the history of the collection of the books of the Bible into the canon as we have it today. It is believed by the Jews that the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, which they arranged as twenty-two, were collected and arranged by Ezra, Nehemiah, and their companions after the rebuilding of the temple, on the return from captivity. The Talmud says that the Hebrew canon was formed gradually by Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the Great Synagogue, a council composed of one hundred and twenty members, priests, Levites, doctors of the law, and other eminent representatives of the people. It is said that Nehemiah was its first president and that it met at different times in the city of Jerusalem through a period of over one hundred years.

The names and order of the books in the Septuagint or old Greek version of the Bible are as follows: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 3 Kings, 4 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Lamentations, Epistle of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees,—forty-nine books in all. There are a number of books in this list not found in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, and also a number of additions to some of the old Hebrew books. These extra books and parts of books are called the Apocrypha. The Protestant church has always regarded the Apocryphal books as of inferior authority and has, therefore, rejected them from the sacred canon. The Protestant canon of the Old Testament coincides with the Hebrew Bible. The Roman Catholic church accepts most of the Apocryphal books. This canon was established by decree of the Council of Trent (1546) and reaffirmed by the Vatican Council of 1870.

*Ancient Versions.* The Bible has been translated into more than 450 languages and dialects, but there are a few ancient versions of peculiar value because the student must look to them as furnishing



the authentic text for his modern version in whatever language it may be. The two principal ancient versions are the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate. The Greek version, called the Septuagint, is worthy of special notice for several reasons. In it are the oldest existing copies of the Scriptures or any part of them in any language; it exerted the largest influence on the language and style of the New Testament; it was extensively used in the time of Christ not only in Egypt where it originated, and in the Roman provinces generally, but also in Palestine; it is notable, too, because the quotations from the Old Testament found in the New Testament are more commonly from this version than from the Hebrew version; that is, Jesus and his disciples made use of this version.

The Jewish account of its origin is, that Ptolemy Philadelphus, who reigned in Egypt 285-247 B. C., requested Eleazer, the high priest of Jerusalem, to send him seventy-two chosen men with a copy of the Jewish law that it might be translated into the Greek language and laid up in the royal library at Alexandria. Eleazer accordingly selected six elders from each of the twelve tribes to do this work. They went to Alexandria taking with them a copy of the law written, it is said, on parchments in letters of gold. These chosen men were received by the king with high honors, and lodged in a palace on an island, supposed to be the island of Pharos, in the harbor of Alexandria, where they completed their work in seventy-two days and were sent home with munificent gifts. There is a legend that they were shut up in separate cells where they had no communication with each other, and that their results when compared were found identical, and hence accepted as inspired. However, the marked inequality of different parts of the work sufficiently disproves this legend and seem to support the belief that the version was the product of different times as well as of different hands.

The great Latin version known as the Vulgate is of great importance because it has vitally influenced the English Bible. The early English versions were translations from the Vulgate and much of the strength and beauty of its Latin passed into the literary style of the translators. The word "Vulgate" means "common" or "current." Toward the close of the fourth century A. D. the various Latin texts of the Bible had become so much corrupted that revision was imperative. The great scholar known as St. Jerome, was selected by Pope Damasus to perform this important task. He revised the New Testament about 385, and completed the Old Testament in the year 405. Jerome's translation was not at first accepted by the church: but it

gradually made its way into favor and about 200 years after his death, became the universally received version of the church. In 1546 it was declared the authorized version of the Roman church and has remained so to the present day.

*English Versions.* The Bible was not translated into the English tongue all at once. It grew slowly following closely the course alike of religious and intellectual life. Its story begins with Caedmon of Whitby, on the northeastern coast of England, in the year 670. Here the English Bible and English poetry both took their rise. Caedmon in his rude rhyme, sang the song of Genesis and Exodus, and of the Gospel. The next translating was done by the Venerable Bede, the father of English learning. At the monastery of Jarrow he translated different parts of the Bible and the last work that he did was a translation of the Gospel of John. King Alfred the Great was the third translator. While battling with the Danes and giving laws to his people, he found time to translate many books. With a band of helpers he translated the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the 20th, 21st, and 22nd chapters of Exodus, and parts of the Psalms; when he died he was engaged in completing the translation of the Psalms.

The first great monument of real English literature is Wycliffe's Bible published in 1383. This translation has influenced every succeeding English translation of the Bible to the present day. In 1525 the mantle of Wycliffe fell on William Tyndale, later the martyred hero. In that year he published his translation of the New Testament. On account of his efforts to put the Bible into the hands of the common people, he was forced to flee from England, but from his place of refuge on the continent, he poured Testaments into England in a flood. By order of Cardinal Wolsey these books were bought up and destroyed; but as fast as they were bought up and burned at St. Paul's Cross, the money which was paid for them as they were seized, was used to run the printing presses of Tyndale, which turned out two or three copies of the New Testament for every one that the authorities destroyed. In 1530 he published his translation of the Pentateuch, and in 1534, a revision of his New Testament of 1525. In 1536 he was put to death for his zeal and persistence in the work of giving the Bible to the English people in their own language.

From 1525 for three-quarters of a century there were numerous versions of the Bible published in England. Among the most noted and influential were: Miles Coverdale's Bible, 1535; Matthew's Bible, 1537; The Great Bible, 1540; the Geneva New Testament, 1557; the



Geneva Bible, 1560; the Bishops' Bible, 1568; the Rheims New Testament, 1582; and the Douay Bible, 1609; these last two are translations made by the Roman Catholic church.

In 1611 what is known as the Authorized Version was completed. It was translated and published under the direction of King James I. When James came to the throne he found the Geneva Bible supported by the people at large, and the Bishops' Bible supported by ecclesiastical authority. In order to harmonize the factions he called together fifty-four learned men from both the High Church and the Independent Church to undertake a new translation. It was completed in 1611. Although this version did not win immediate acceptance, its qualities were such that it grew steadily in favor and within half a century was accepted by all English Protestants. No other English translation can compare with it in enduring vitality. It is noted for soundness of scholarship, breadth of spirit, and beauty of diction.

For two and a half centuries the Authorized Version held the field with little challenge to its supremacy. But in the 19th century the multiplication of ancient manuscripts hitherto unknown or inaccessible, the advance in textual scholarship, and the inevitable changes in the English vocabulary, were strong reasons for a revision of the Authorized Version. Accordingly, in February, 1870, action was taken by the convocation of Canterbury and a distinguished array of divines and scholars began the work of revision. Not long afterwards American scholars were invited to participate in the work and two American companies began their labors in October, 1872. The revision of the New Testament was completed in 1881 and the entire Revised Version of the Bible appeared in May, 1885. The American Revised Version was published in 1901.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT AS A WHOLE

The books of the Old Testament as arranged in the English Bible may be classified as follows:

The Pentateuch .....	5
Books of History.....	12
Books of Poetry.....	5
Books of the Major Prophets.....	5
Books of the Minor Prophets.....	12
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Total .....	39

This classification is hardly accurate or logical. The Pentateuch contains a great deal of history; Ecclesiastes is not a book of poetry though classed as such; while Lamentations may be classed as both poetry and prophecy. The arrangements of the books in the English versions differ much from the order in the Hebrew Bible. There the division is three-fold: "the law," "the prophets," and "the writings."

The word Pentateuch means the "five-volume book." These five books are sometimes called "the five books of Moses." They are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The books of history are in order: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 King, 2 King, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The books classed as poetry are: Job, The Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The books of the Greater Prophets are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The Lesser Prophets are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

*The Apocrypha.* Besides these thirty-nine books of the canonical list there are fourteen books and parts of books classed as the Apocrypha. They are named as follows: 1. 1 Esdras; 2. 2 Esdras; 3. Tobit; 4. Judith; 5. Additions to Esther; 6. The Wisdom of Solomon; 7. Ecclesiasticus; 8. Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah; 9. The Story of the Three Holy Children (in Daniel, Ch. 3); 10. The Story of Susanna (in Daniel, Ch. 13); 11. The Idol Bel and the Dragon (in Daniel, Ch. 14); 12. The Prayer of Manasses (added as note to Chronicles); 13. 1 Maccabees; 14. 2 Maccabees.

In the history of the formation of the canon these books have had varying treatment. They are entirely rejected from the Hebrew Bible; they are not included in the Protestant canon, and when published are printed separately; they are all accepted by the Roman Catholic Church except 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, and The Prayer of Manasses.

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## BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE INDIVIDUAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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The unity of the Bible is spiritual and not mechanical. Though bound up in a single volume and called the "Bible," it is in fact a collection of separate works written by different authors at different dates. In the Old Testament there are thirty-nine of these individual books: the Pentateuch or five-volumed book, the twelve books of his-



tory, the five books of poetry, the four books of the Major Prophets, and the twelve books of the Minor Prophets.

**THE BOOK OF GENESIS.** The title means the book of beginnings. The first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis give an account of the world's history down to the origin of the chosen people. An account of the creation of all things is given; the presence of evil in the world is explained; the beginning of civilization is shown; the necessity for the punishment of sin is emphasized; and the diversity of languages and peoples is accounted for. The chapters from 12 to 50 present the history of the fathers of the Hebrew race, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. The stories about these great patriarchs make a sort of handbook of life. They furnish materials out of which the Hebrew race has constructed its noblest and most inspiring ideals.

**THE BOOK OF EXODUS.** The word "Exodus" means "a going out." The book of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. Exodus opens with an account of the rapid increase of Jacob's descendants in Egypt and of the attempts to repress them. It shows the various steps toward the deliverance from bondage, then the journey to Sinai, the happenings at Sinai, and closes with the erection of the tabernacle in the second year of the exodus. Genesis is pure narrative; Exodus combines narrative and law; besides there are other materials dealing with the organization of the church and the state. Here it is shown how the great patriarchal family became a nation.

**THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.** The title means that this is a book of laws. The book is a continuation of Exodus. It opens with an account of the laws which should govern the offerings and the ritual of the Hebrew sanctuary. The contents are purely legislative, the laws being civil, ceremonial, moral, religious, and sanitary. There are presented the fundamental laws of sacrifice, of purification, of atonement, and of vows and tithes. There is also a section of several chapters called The Law of Holiness, which is thought to be the oldest part of the Bible.

**THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.** This book is so called because it gives an account of two numberings of the people, at Sinai, and at Moab. In character it is much like Exodus, containing history, law, and accounts of the organization of the nation. It is a brief account of what the nation did from the time it left Sinai till it arrived on the eastern border of Canaan. It covers a period of about thirty-eight years.

**THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.** The name of this book indicates that it is a duplicate copy of the law. It was doubtless so called because it was regarded by the Jews as a re-statement of the whole preceding

legislation. The book is the record of three addresses which Moses delivered to the people on the plains of Moab at the close of the wanderings in the desert, of the appointment of his successor, of his Song and Blessing, and of his death. The three addresses of Moses are really a re-statement of the laws which he had given to the people.

**THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.** This book is named from its chief character, Joshua, the successor to Moses. In its general characteristics it is much like parts of the Pentateuch. In classifying the books of the Bible it is sometimes added to the Pentateuch, the whole being then called the Hexateuch. It covers a period of about twenty-five years from the crossing of the Jordan to the allotment of the land among the tribes. The first twelve chapters give an account of the conquest of Palestine. Chapters 13 to 22 contain an account of the allotment of the land among the tribes, and the last two chapters contain two farewell addresses spoken by Joshua, full of promises and warnings.

**THE BOOK OF JUDGES.** This book, named from the title given the rulers, presents pictures of a time in the history of Israel when the people were trying to gain complete possession of the land and to achieve national unity. It consists largely of hero stories fit into a rigid chronological framework whose object is to show, by a definite formula, that the prosperity of Israel must depend upon the nation's faithfulness and devotion to Jehovah. The last five chapters give a vivid account of two striking incidents which illustrate the lawless condition of the age.

**THE BOOK OF RUTH.** This is a story of the time of the Judges. It is a picture of piety, contentment, love, devotion, and tolerance in strange contrast to the idolatry, bloodshed, and violence of the age. Its purpose is to give an account of the ancestry of King David, and may have been written as a protest against Ezra's severity concerning foreign wives.

**THE BOOK OF I SAMUEL.** The two Books of Samuel, so called because Samuel is the chief figure at the opening of the story, as found in the English versions, form but one book in the old Hebrew Bible. In the Septuagint it was divided into two books, as was done also with the following Book of Kings, and the four resulting books were called 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Books of the Kingdoms. First Samuel opens with events belonging to the age of the Judges when Eli was priest at Shiloh. The narrative presents the last days of Eli, the entire life of Samuel, the reign of Saul, the anointing of David, his life as an outlaw, his fame as a warrior, and closes with the death of Saul and



Jonathan on Mount Gilboa. First Samuel is a fine piece of Old Testament historical writing. There are great men presented in its pages, Samuel a majestic figure, the founder of the monarchy, Saul one of the saddest and most dramatic characters in Bible history, and David the noble young man preparing himself for a great career as king of Israel. The tragic incidents in Saul's career, the romantic outlaw life of David, and the ideal friendship of Jonathan are set forth with vividness and power.

**THE BOOK OF II SAMUEL.** This book is closely connected with First Samuel. In the first chapter there is an account of the swift runner telling the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan to David in his far away place of refuge. He is overwhelmed with grief and gives expression to his sorrow in that beautiful poem of mourning, one of the most spontaneous and picturesque elegies in any language. The first chapters of the book tell of David's rule over Judah for seven and a half years, of his being chosen king of the whole of Israel, of his selection of the captured city of Jerusalem as his political capital, of the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, and of the extending of the boundaries of the kingdom from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. The central part of the book gives an account of the court life and the unfortunate intrigues of David's family. The last five chapters detail various disconnected matters and events.

**THE BOOK OF I KINGS.** The first two chapters of this book give an account of the last days of David, of the plot of Adonijah to make himself king, and the placing of Solomon on the throne. In the nine following chapters are recorded the internal relations of the monarchy, its foreign relations, its general condition of wealth and weakness, closing with the prediction of its speedy disruption. In chapter twelve begins the account of the division of the tribes, and the remaining ten chapters present the varying fortune of the two new kingdoms. This section of the book is made up of brief summaries of the reigns of the kings, interspersed with longer narratives concerning the interesting and exciting careers of the prophets. In the shorter narratives the facts are fitted into a stereotyped, chronological framework which makes much of the narrative seem mechanical. The stories in this book are more formal and didactic than those in the two preceding books. There are many vivid pictures, but we do not know the inner life of Solomon as we do that of David or Saul, or Samuel. However, the stories of Elijah and Elisha are among the most vivid narratives of the Old Testament.

**THE BOOK OF II KINGS.** The book of First Kings closes with the

death of Ahab, and Second Kings opens with Ahaziah on the throne of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and Elijah closing his spectacular career as the national prophet of Israel. Elijah is translated and Elisha succeeds him. The interwoven fortunes of Judah and Israel are followed until Shalmanesar, king of Assyria, overcomes Hoshea, Israel's last king, and carries the people into captivity, thus ending the history of the northern kingdom (721 B. C.) The eight closing chapters follow the decline of Judah to its overthrow.

**THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES, I AND II.** The Books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, are evidently the work of a single author. The Chronicles cover the period from Adam to the edict of Cyrus permitting the exiles to return to Judah, 537 B. C. They thus cover the same period covered by the other historical books from Genesis to II Kings, but their point of view is very different. The author got his materials from these historical books and from a number of other books named in the narrative but not now in existence. The first ten chapters of I Chronicles are introductory and devoted principally to genealogies from Adam to David and after. The last nineteen chapters go over again the history of the reign of David. The first nine chapters of II Chronicles are given to the history of Solomon and the remaining 27 to the rest of the kings. As far as possible everything discreditable to David, Solomon, and the other righteous kings of Judah is omitted from these books, and since the northern kingdom was not regarded as a part of the true Israel, it is almost entirely ignored, even Elijah and Elisha being scarcely mentioned. The point of view in these books is that God had for this people a particular purpose and mission and that all the happenings of their long and varied history were intended to work out that one purpose.

**THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.** These books occupy the last place in the Old Testament record of the history of the Hebrew people. The period covered in them extends from the time of the first return from captivity, (536 B. C.) to the second visit of Nehemiah to Palestine (432 B. C.) The first six chapters of Ezra give an account of the work done by Zerubbabel as governor, the chief of which is the rebuilding of the temple through many delays and discouragements. The last four chapters give an account of the journey of Ezra from the Persian court to Jerusalem and of his work and reforms.

The book of Nehemiah may be divided into four parts: The first is the story of Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem and of his building the walls. The second gives an account of the wonderful revival of inter-



est in the Scriptures through the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah. The third part consists of lists of dwellers in Jerusalem, country towns, priestly and Levitical families, of priests, Levites, etc. The last section gives an account of the dedication of the walls, of the second return of Nehemiah, and of the reforms which he then instituted.

**THE BOOK OF ESTHER.** The scenes of the book of Esther are laid in the court of Xerxes. It is a book of thrilling interest and of great literary value. See analysis of the book on another page.

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## THE BOOKS OF POETRY

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The five books classed as poetry are Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The fact is that the book of Ecclesiastes is not in the form of poetry and that the book of Lamentations does have that form. However, we shall discuss Ecclesiastes in this group as we are following the old classification.

**THE BOOK OF JOB.** The old theory was that the book of Job was written by Moses, but it is now believed to belong to a much later period. The book consists of a discussion carried on by Job, his three friends, Elihu, and Jehovah Himself, in a series of poetic discourses. The discussion is introduced and concluded by brief prose narratives, the Prologue and Epilogue. The speech of Elihu also is preceded by a short prose statement. The problem of the poem is to discover whether righteousness in men is disinterested, and whether the suffering which one must endure in this world is always sent as a punishment for his sin. The poem is great in many ways.

**THE BOOK OF PSALMS.** The Hebrew title for this book is a word meaning "praise-songs." The Greek word for this title, found in the Septuagint, is "Psalmoi," from which we get the modern title Psalms. This volume is not simply one book but is made up of five books containing the work of a number of authors. There are one hundred and fifty of the psalms and they were written through a period of possibly 1000 years. It is a wonderful collection of sacred poetry, lofty in thought and feeling, touching all the vicissitudes of human experience from the depths of trouble to the heights of joy.

The division into five books is of great antiquity and is indicated by a doxology at the end of each book. The first book includes Psalms I to XLI. The authorship of thirty-seven of these is attributed to



David, though modern scholarship declares that he is the author of very few of them. The second book, Psalms XLII to LXXII, attributes eighteen to David, seven to the sons of Korah, and one to Asaph. The third book includes Psalms LXXIII to LXXXIX. This book is liturgical in form and has many historical references. The fourth book includes Psalms XC to CVI. In this division is found the noble poem Psalm XC whose authorship is ascribed to Moses. The fifth book includes the remaining 44 Psalms. Many of these breathe the joy of the captives on their return to their own land.

**THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.** The Book of Proverbs, like Job, deals with the system of Providential rewards and punishments, but deals with their practical application rather than their theological significance. The fundamental idea set forth is that the world is morally governed. There are five divisions of the chapters of this book: The praise of wisdom, Chaps. I to IX; the proverbs of Solomon, Chaps. X to XXII; the sayings of the wise, Chaps. XXIII to XXIV; second collection of Solomon's proverbs, Chaps. XXV to XXIX; the words of Augur, Chap. XXX; the words of King Lemuel, Chap. XXXI, 1-9; acrostic poem in praise of the good wife, Chap. XXXI, 10-31.

**THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.** This book, as has been said before, although classed as a poem, is really in the form of prose. It deals with the meaning and value of life, discusses the question whether life, under the most favorable circumstances, is really worth living. It is written in the name of Solomon, but simply as a matter of literary form. In chapters one and two the "Preacher" reviews the different objects which men pursue, labor, wisdom, pleasure, riches, and finds in each only vanity and vexation of spirit. Chapters three and four declare that there is a time and season for all things but wonders who can find them. Human society is surveyed and only trouble, failure, and disappointment are seen. Chapters five to twelve present materials somewhat obscure, yet the conclusion is not so pessimistic as in the first chapter; the real aim of life and the true basis of happiness are made clear.

**THE SONG OF SOLOMON.** There is much difference of opinion as to the proper interpretation of this poem. In the olden time the Jews interpreted it as an allegory. The Targum makes it represent the entire history of Israel from the exodus to the future Messiah. The early Christian fathers gave it an allegorical interpretation making Solomon represent Christ and the Shulamite maiden represent the church. There are various opinions, too, concerning the form of the poem. The latest explanation is that it consists of a series of lyric

idyls which are marriage songs. It is explained that even today there is a Syrian custom of celebrating weddings by such ceremonies as are presented in the poem. While it may be that these customs explain the songs, while it is possible thus to divide it into dramatic lyrics and regard them as a suite of wedding songs, it is possible also, and more interesting and pleasing to look upon it as a drama.

Brief synopsis of the story: "A beautiful Shulamite maiden, surprised by the king and his train on a royal progress in the north, has been brought to the palace in Jerusalem where the king hopes to win her affections, and to induce her to exchange her rustic home for the honor and enjoyments which a court life could afford. She has, however, already pledged her heart to a young shepherd; and the admiration and blandishments which the king lavishes upon her are powerless to make her forget him. In the end she is allowed to return to her mountain home, where, at the close of the poem, the lovers appear hand in hand, and express in warm and glowing words, the superiority of genuine, spontaneous, affection over that which may be purchased by wealth or rank."

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## THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS

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### *The Five Greater Prophets.*

**THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.** Isaiah is reckoned the greatest of all the prophets of the Old Testament. Little is known of the details of his life, yet he was a part of many of the stirring events depicted in his prophecies. The book is a long one, consisting of sixty-six chapters. Most scholars attribute the work to two different authors, the First Isaiah being credited with the first thirty-nine chapters and the Second Isaiah with the last twenty-seven chapters. The first division deals with prophecies about Israel and Judah and foreign nations, Assyria being the great enemy. The second part might be called "the book of consolations." It is a continuous prophecy dealing hopefully with the restoration of Israel from the Babylonian captivity and presenting enthusiastic pictures of the ideal kingdom and the Messianic king.

**THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH.** This book is a combination of history, biography, and prophecy. Jeremiah lived in the midst of the tragic scenes of the destruction of Jerusalem. His words of warning and



exhortation were unheeded by his countrymen; they even persecuted him for his plain speaking. He was deeply affected by the attitude of his countrymen and by the ruin which he foresaw would come upon his own country. So he breaks out in bitter lamentations and cries aloud to God for vengeance. The book closes with an account of the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans and of the sending of the people into exile.

**THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL.** The prophet Ezekiel was carried into captivity to Babylon, B. C. 597. He was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. Ezekiel marks the transition from the prophet to the scribe or theologian in Jewish history. The older prophets were first of all preachers, and their utterances were usually reduced to writing by others. But Ezekiel not only delivered his prophecies to audiences, but wrote them down methodically in a book. His prophecies are rendered vivid and sometimes obscure by his use of visions and symbols. The first twenty-four chapters of the book deal with predictions of the fall of Jerusalem. The next eight chapters present prophecies regarding foreign nations, and the last sixteen chapters speak of the restoration and re-allotment of the land, of the ideal temple, and of Jehovah Triumphant.

**THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS.** An ancient tradition credits this work to Jeremiah, but modern scholars say that the author is unknown. The book is poetic in form, each of the five chapters being a complete and independent poem. The first four are alphabetic acrostics. In chapters one, two, and four, each verse of the twenty-two begins with the corresponding letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order; in chapter three each letter is given three verses, all three beginning with the corresponding letter of the alphabet. In chapter five there are twenty-two verses but they are not arranged in alphabetical order.

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL.** This book consists of twelve chapters, six relating stories about Daniel and his companions, and six presenting his dreams and visions. The stories of the first division are: Faithfulness to a national law; Nebuchadnezzar's dream; idolatry and the fiery furnace; the tree cut down; the tragic feast; the lion's den. The last division details four prophetic visions; the four beasts; the ram and the he-goat; the seventy weeks; the last vision.

*The Twelve Minor Prophets.*

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**THE BOOK OF HOSEA.** This book is the first and the longest of the twelve. Hosea lived in the northern kingdom. It appears that his wife had been unfaithful to him and he uses this experience as an allegory of the unfaithfulness of Israel to Jehovah. In the last eleven chapters he denounces Israel for the combination of immorality and ritualism and for the cruelty and oppression of nobles and priests.

**THE BOOK OF JOEL.** Apparently these prophecies were delivered on the occasion of a plague of locusts which had been so severe as to cause the regular temple offerings to be suspended. The prophet proclaims the "Day of the Lord" as a season of terrible calamities from which Judah may be delivered by repentance; then the spirit of the Lord will be poured out upon the people.

**THE BOOK OF AMOS.** Amos tells us that he is not a professional prophet, but a peasant of Tekoa, "a herdman and dresser of sycamore trees." There are three divisions of the book. The first proclaims the condemnation and punishment of heathen nations; the second arraigns Israel and pronounces its doom; and the third presents five visions depicting the sure destruction of Jerusalem, and closes with a picture of the coming of the new kingdom and the reign of plenty.

**THE BOOK OF OBADIAH.** The occasion of this prophecy was the brutality of Edom in rejoicing over the captivity and ruin of Jerusalem. The one chapter speaks of Edom's guilt and punishment, the extension of this punishment to all heathen nations, and the promise of the restoration of Israel.

**THE BOOK OF JONAH.** Although this book stands among the prophetic books, it does not contain prophecies; it is an anonymous narrative. See fuller account of it on another page.

**THE BOOK OF MICAH.** Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, and pronounces judgment upon Israel for national sins, for social sins, and for covenant-breaking. He then recounts what God has done for Israel and promises mercy and restoration after repentance.

**THE BOOK OF NAHUM.** This book has but one theme, the destruction of Nineveh. The prophet announces the coming ruin of that city on account of its defiance of Jehovah, its oppression of Judah, and because it was a "bloody city, all full of lies and robbery."

**THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.** The situation as seen by the prophet in this book is that Jerusalem must certainly fall before the rising Chaldean power, and he is greatly distressed because he can not understand



how such a result can advance righteousness in the world. So he challenges Jehovah to defend his action in thus governing the world. It is the problem of Job over again. Jehovah is represented as answering the challenge and telling the prophet that he can see but a small part of Jehovah's great plan, that so far as the Chaldeans are wicked they too must perish, and that righteousness will at last prevail in the world.

**THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH.** Zephaniah was a great-grandson of Hezekiah and prophesied during the reign of Josiah. A dark day of destruction for all nations is foretold. Judah shall suffer because of the wickedness of its rulers, priests, and prophets; Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia and Nineveh shall in succession be ruined. But there shall be a purged and purified remnant whom the Lord shall bring back from captivity.

**THE BOOKS OF HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH.** When these two prophets appeared 42,000 returned exiles had been living in Jerusalem sixteen years. For two years they had worked at rebuilding the Temple; for fourteen years the work had been at a standstill. So Haggai and Zechariah were commissioned to arouse the Jews to greater energy in the rebuilding. Their prophecies delivered in burning and inspiring words stirred the people to such enthusiasm that the Temple soon rose from its ruins.

**THE BOOK OF MALACHI.** This book is anonymous and undated but it certainly belongs to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Temple had been restored but the people were disappointed because they had not realized a glorious Messianic kingdom. Malachi seeks to recall the allegiance of the people to Jehovah and to revive the national spirit. He shows that Jehovah is the moral governor of the world and that it pays to serve him. The book closes with an exhortation to the people to obey the law and with a promise of the coming of Elijah.

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## THE GREAT STORIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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1. The Creation, Genesis I-II, 3.
2. The Garden of Eden, Genesis II, 4-III.
3. Story of Cain and Abel, Genesis IV, 1-15.
4. The Story of the Flood, Genesis VI, 5-IX, 17.
5. The Tower of Babel, Genesis XI, 1-9.
6. The Call of Abraham, Genesis XI, 27-XII, 9.

7. Abraham and Lot, Genesis XIII-XIV.
8. The story of Hagar and Ishmael, Genesis XVI-XXI, 8-21.
9. The Covenant with Abraham, Genesis XVII.
10. The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis XVIII-XIX.
11. The Offering of Isaac, Genesis XXII, 1-19.
12. The Wooing of Rebekah, Genesis XXIV.
13. The Story of Esau and Jacob, Genesis XXV, 19-XXX.
14. Joseph and His Brethren, Genesis XXXVII; XXXIX-XLVII.
15. The Death of Jacob and Joseph, Genesis XLVIII-L.
16. Early Life of Moses, Exodus I-II.
17. The Call of Moses, Exodus III-IV.
18. The Oppression of the Israelites, Exodus V-VI.
19. The Ten Plagues, Exodus VI-XII.
20. Institution of The Passover, Exodus XII, 42-XIII, 16.
21. The Passage of the Red Sea, Exodus XIII, 17-XIV.
22. The Giving of the Ten Commandments, Exodus XIX-XX, 21.
23. Incident of the Golden Calf, Exodus XXXII.
24. The Attempt to Enter into Canaan, Numbers XIII-XIV.
25. The Story of Balak and Balaam, Numbers XXII-XXIV.
26. The Death of Moses, Deuteronomy XXXIV.
27. Rahab and the Spies, Joshua II.
28. Crossing the Jordan, Joshua III-IV.
29. The Siege of Jericho, Joshua VI.
30. Joshua at Gibeon, Joshua X.
31. The Death of Joshua, Joshua XXXIII-XXXIV.
32. The Defeat and Death of Sisera, Judges IV-V.
33. The Deeds of Gideon, Judges VI-VII.
34. The Story of Abimelech and Jotham, Judges IX.
35. The Deeds and Vow of Jephthah, Judges XI, 1-11, 30-XII.
36. The Life and Death of Samson, Judges XIII-XVI.
37. The Story of Ruth and Naomi, Ruth I-IV.
38. The Calling of Samuel, 1 Samuel III.
39. The Ark of the Covenant in Philistia, 1 Samuel IV-VI.
40. The Anointing of Saul, 1 Samuel VIII-X.
41. Jonathan and His Armorbearer, 1 Samuel XIV, 1-23.
42. Saul's Disobedience, 1 Samuel XV.
43. The anointing of David, 1 Samuel XV.
44. The Story of David and Goliath, 1 Samuel XVII-XVIII, 16.
45. The Friendship of David and Jonathan, 1 Samuel XVIII, 1-5;  
XX.



46. Stories of David and Saul, 1 Samuel XXI-XXIV; XXVI-XXVII, 4.
47. Saul and the Witch of Endor, 1 Samuel XXVIII.
48. Death of Saul and Jonathan, 1 Samuel XXI-2 Samuel I.
49. David Made King, 2 Samuel V.
50. The Story of David and Bathsheba, 2 Samuel XI-XII, 24.
51. Early Career of Absalom, 2 Samuel XIII-XIV, 24.
52. The Rebellion of Absalom, 2 Samuel XIV, 25-XVIII, 33.
53. The Devotion of Rizpah, 2 Samuel XXI, 1-14.
54. Solomon Made King, 1 Kings I, 11-53.
55. The Wisdom of Solomon, 1 Kings III, 5-28.
56. The Visit of the Queen of Sheba, 1 Kings X, 1-13.
57. Division of the Kingdom—Rehoboam and Jeroboam, 1 Kings XI, 26-XII, 24.
58. Stories of Elijah, 1 Kings, XVI-XIX.
59. Ahab Secures Naboth's Vineyard, 1 Kings XXI.
60. The Death of Ahab, 1 Kings XXII, 29-40.
61. The Translation of Elijah, 2 Kings II, 1-18.
62. Stories of Elisha, 1 Kings XXIX, 19-21; 2 Kings II-IV; VIII, 7-15; XIII, 14-21.
63. The Healing of Naaman the Leper, 2 Kings V.
64. Elisha and the Syrian King, 2 Kings VI, 8-23.
65. Elisha and the Siege of Samaria, 2 Kings VI, 24-VII, 20.
66. Jehu and Jezebel, 2 Kings IX.
67. Career of the Wicked Athaliah, 2 Kings XII.
68. The Destruction of Sennacherib, 2 Kings XVIII, 13-XIX, 37.
69. The Healing of Hezekiah, 2 Kings XXII.
70. The Great Reform under Josiah, 2 Kings XXII-XXIII, 30.
71. The Call of Isaiah, Isaiah VI.
72. The Capture of Jerusalem, 2 Kings XXV.
73. Esther, a Drama of the Court, Esther I-X.
74. Daniel and His Three Friends, Daniel I.
75. Nebuchadnezzar's Forgotten Dream, Daniel II.
76. The Burning Fiery Furnace, Daniel III.
77. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Tree Cut Down, Daniel IV.
78. The Story of Belshazzar's Feast, Daniel V.
79. Daniel in the Den of Lions, Daniel VI.
80. The Story of Jonah, Book of Jonah.

81. The Return from Exile, First Colony (536 B. C.), Ezra I; 11, 64-VI, 22.
82. The Second Colony, led by Ezra, Ezra VII-X.
83. The Third Colony, led by Nehemiah, Nehemiah I-VI.

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## METHOD OF STUDYING THE BIBLE

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A student can not fail to get good results from his reading and study of the Bible, if he will perseveringly observe the following rules:

1. Begin at the beginning. If you have decided to follow out a systematic study of the Bible, it is much better to begin with Genesis and take the books in their regular order. Of course all of them will not submit themselves to this method, but most of the books can be so studied.

2. Read the book. It is not asked that it be studied in the ordinary sense, or memorized, or even understood fully at first; simply read it. The purpose is to make the task as easy and natural and pleasant as possible. It does not matter much how rapidly you read, for the time being, if you only read. There is a great deal of study of the Bible by simply reading books that tell about the Bible. Many students will put hours on such study and very much less time on the real reading of the Bible.

3. Read it continuously. By continuously two things are meant: read the book uninfluenced by its division into chapters and verses; and second, read it at a single sitting, if the book is not too long. These verse and chapter divisions we should always remember are of human origin, and while effecting a good purpose in some particulars, are a hindrance in the mastery of the book. Sometimes a chapter or a verse will cut a truth in half whose halves state a different fact or teach a different doctrine from that intended by the whole. The reason for reading a book at a single sitting is that many of the books of the Bible have a single thread running through the whole and it is necessary to follow it continuously and unbrokenly. Of course there are many books too long to be so read, but many of them are short enough to be read at a single sitting.

4. Read it repeatedly. Mastery of a book can not be accomplished in one reading. Indeed the suggestion has been made in the second rule that the first reading may be rapid. But by repeated readings



the truth will grow upon one and a more familiar knowledge will make the whole book clearer and stronger.

5. Read it independently. By independently is meant, first of all, that it should be read without reference to commentaries and outside aids. These are, of course invaluable in their place but in the mastery of the English Bible according to the plan suggested here, their place is not before but after one has got an outline of a given book for himself. One should make an outline of the book for himself, even though it is not so correct nor so complete as an outline he might find in these outside helps. Then, again, the independent reading of a book in this sense, is urged because of its development of one's intellectual power. To be ever leaning on help from others is like walking with crutches all one's life.

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## EXAMPLES OF LITERARY STUDY

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### *A Study of Psalm I.*

This Psalm is introductory to the Book of Psalms. It is a development in poetical language and imagery of the thought repeated many times in the Book of Proverbs, that it is well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. It proclaims the superiority of the man occupied in meditating upon the divine law, to the worldly man who is without stability, or accomplishment, or security for the future. A suggestive title might be "The Tree and the Chaff."

Development of the theme: The first stanza of five lines contrasts the man of pious meditation to three grades of bad men: the one who *walketh* in the counsel of the ungodly;

the one who *standeth* in the way of sinners;

and the one who *sitteth* in the seat of the scornful.

Note the three-fold parellism—walk, stand, sit; counsel, way, session; wicked, sinners, scornors. Three successive steps in a career of evil are presented: adoption of principles; persistence in practices; deliberate association with those who are notorious offenders.

In the second stanza of six lines the tree rooted, vigorous, and luxuriant with green leaves, and full of fruit, is contrasted to the light and unstable chaff driven before the wind. These well symbolize the two contrasted lives.

The conclusion is presented in stanza three of four lines: The wick-

ed can not stand when his life is given its true value nor can sinners remain with the righteous. The judgment referred to is not that of the last day, but the estimate formed of a man from his acts from day to day. The meaning of the word "knoweth" includes the ideas of approval, care, and guidance.

Among the parallelisms are lines four and five (synonymous); lines six and seven (synthetic); lines fourteen and fifteen (antithetic). The figures of speech are metaphors and similes. They are numerous, apt, and vivid.

### *A Study of Psalm XXIV.*

This Psalm was used on the occasion of the bringing of the sacred ark to Jerusalem. Let us imagine that the great procession is forming at the foot of the hill ready to march up carrying the ark to the temporary structure used for worship. The procession of priests and trumpeters is leading the way and the whole company sings:

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,  
The world and they that dwell therein;  
For he hath founded it upon the seas.  
And established it upon the floods.

Then there is a solo by a priest:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?

Another priest responds:

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,  
Who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity,  
And hath not sworn deceitfully,  
He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,  
And righteousness from the God of our salvation.

Then a chorus by the whole company:

This is the generation of them that seek him,  
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob.

The procession is halted at the gates of the temple and a summons is given to open the gates. Certain words of challenge and response have been agreed upon and the gates will not open until the proper response has been given. The leaders of the procession sing their demands:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in!

Challenge from within:



Who is this King of glory?

Response from without:

The Lord, strong and mighty,  
The Lord, mighty in battle.

This is not the correct response and the gates are not opened, so the worshippers must repeat their summons:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors,  
And the King of glory shall come in!

Challenge from within:

Who is this King of glory?

Joint chorus from without, in which at last the great name is spoken:

The Lord of Hosts,  
He is the King of glory!

At these words the gates open and the further ceremonies of the inauguration are carried out.

### *The Book of Esther.*

Introductory: Esther is the last of the historical books in the Bible. There are those who declare it is not fit to be in the canon, that the name of God is not in it, neither is his spirit; Luther said that it is full of all heathen naughtiness. It is hard to understand such strictures as these when the book is really delightful as a story and full of striking lessons.

The book is here presented as a drama, although it does not have the regular dramatic form. However, it has all the interest of a stirring tragedy, and the action proceeds very much as in regular drama.

The scene is laid at Shushan, the palace, in Susa, the Persian capital, situated a few hundred miles north of the Persian gulf. It was one of the oldest seats of civilization. The time can not be made out exactly, but if Ahasuerus is the historical Xerxes, the date is about 470 B. C.

The chief characters are as follows:

Ahasuerus, who is recognized as being the Xerxes of history, who was vainglorious, cowardly, luxurious, pusillanimous, licentious and bloodthirsty.

Mordecai, a Jew, a man of ability, honesty, uprightness and courage.

Esther, the beautiful heroine of the play, the cousin and adopted daughter of Mordecai, as lovely in character as she was in person.

Haman, a man of low parentage, a scheming politician, haughty, vindictive, shrewd, and unscrupulous.

Vashti, the queen of whom we know but little except that she showed good sense and modesty in refusing to come into the presence of the drunken revellers.

The story has the five acts found in the classic drama with a brief epilogue:

Act 1. Esther's elevation to the throne (chap. 1-2).

Act 2. Haman's plot and Esther's trouble (3-4).

Act 3. Esther's courage and Haman's fall (5-6-7).

Act 4. Esther's undoing of Haman's plot and Mordecai's elevation to Haman's place (8).

Act 5. Esther's deliverance of her people and the institution of Purim (9).

Epilogue: The glory of Ahasuerus and the greatness of Mordecai (10).

Act 1.—Scenes: 1. The great feast. 2. Vashti's courageous refusal. 3. The gathering of the maidens. 4. The plot against the king.

Act 2.—Scenes: 1. Haman and Mordecai. 2. The request and the decree. 3. The casting of the lot. 4. Mordecai's request of Esther.

Act 3.—Scenes: 1. Esther's dramatic appeal. 2. The banquet. 3. Haman's elation. 4. The sleepless king. 5. The king's order. 6. The honor to Mordecai. 7. The second banquet; the crisis.

Act 4.—Scenes: 1. Mordecai made prime minister. 2. Esther's appeal and the new decree.

Act 5.—Scenes: 1. The day of struggle. 2. Esther's cruel appeal. 3. Establishment of Purim.

Epilogue: The tribute and the greatness of the kingdom.

Lessons: Concerning providence, righteousness, pride, courage, retribution and special providences.

### *The Book of Jonah.*

#### 1. Its date and character:

Although the book of Jonah stands in the Book of the Twelve



Prophets, it does not contain prophecies, but an anonymous narrative; the title does not mean that Jonah is the author, but the subject of the book. It differs from Esther in that it is animated by a sympathy for the Gentiles, while Esther shows a bitter hostility toward them. The Jonah of the book is, doubtless, Jonah ben Amitti, who prophesied the deliverance of Israel by Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-27.) The book is generally held to be post-exilic, possibly dating from 350 B. C.

## 2. Controversy over it:

The book of Jonah has had a most interesting history. It was derided by the pagan in the olden time as it is by the sceptic today. A hot debate has raged around it for centuries. This comes from magnifying non-essentials and missing essentials. It has been said of some readers "They pore over the whale and forget God."

## 3. Three views of the book:

- (1) It is an imaginative story and not real history.
- (2) The whole story, including the incident of the whale, is symbolical.
- (3) The whole story is literally true history.

## 4. Analysis of the story:

(1) The call: Jonah receives a call to go to Nineveh to rebuke it for its wickedness. He refuses to go and takes ship at Joppa to flee to Tarshish.

(2) The tempest: The sea rages. The sailors fear for their lives. The gods are angry and must be appeased. Jonah it is who has provoked them to send the storm. He is cast into the sea and there is a great calm.

(3) The deliverance: A great fish swallows Jonah and after three days casts him forth upon the dry land uninjured.

(4) The warning: Jonah goes about the city of Nineveh crying, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The conscience of the people responds to the warning. A fast is proclaimed. The king sits in ashes. The very cattle wear penitential sackcloth. God hears the cry for mercy and saves the city.

(5) Jonah's anger: Jonah is pitiless, nay, very angry. He says that his mission has been a failure. He sits down outside the city to sulk. He is taught the lesson of pity by the incident of the gourd vine. He is asked as to the comparative value of the gourd vine and

the six score thousand little ones of Nineveh. There is no answer to the question. If he is not convinced, he is silenced.

The lesson :

(1) Johovah is the God of the whole world.

(2) All God's threatenings of penalty are conditional. He is a gracious God, slow to answer and plenteous in mercy.

(3) God's mercy is wider than Israel. "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea."

(4) The innocent little ones must not suffer for the sins of those who can discern their right hand from their left.

(5) Love toward God means love toward men.

(6) God's mercy and kindness extend even to our humbler fellow creatures—the dumb brutes.

"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small,  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."







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